

Opening Statement of the Honorable Ed Whitfield
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Vote on H.R. 1582, H.R. 1900, and H.R. 83
July 16, 2013

As part of today's markup, we will be considering three bills that originated in the Energy and Power Subcommittee: H.R. 1582, the "Energy Consumers Relief Act" sponsored by Dr. Cassidy; H.R. 1900, the "Natural Gas Pipeline Permitting Reform Act" sponsored by Mr. Pompeo; and H.R. 83, sponsored by Ms. Christensen. I am proud of my colleagues' efforts to develop these bills and I thank Chairman Upton for bringing these bills before the Full Committee.

Under the "Energy Consumers Relief Act," energy-related regulations issued by EPA that cost more than one billion dollars will finally receive the scrutiny they warrant. Transparency in regulatory costs and benefits is a reasonable expectation, and Dr. Cassidy's bill will make sure the EPA provides it.

For those who contend EPA's major rules do not require greater scrutiny, consider the following examples. In issuing its final Utility MACT rule last year, EPA estimated that only 4,700 megawatts of coal-fired generation would be lost as a result of the rule. Yet only a year later over 43,000 megawatts of coal-fired generation have announced retirement due to environmental regulations, with Utility MACT being the leading cause. EPA's estimate is already off by nearly a factor of ten.

Further, we received testimony before the Energy and Power Subcommittee that the formula used by EPA to measure job impacts is guaranteed – by design – to estimate that each new regulation will actually result in an increase in jobs. Consequently, under EPA's simplistic method, the more costly the regulation, the greater the job increase it will project. The use of such fuzzy math to calculate employment impacts led one economist to conclude, "one cannot characterize the current formula favored by EPA as an economic methodology at all."

It's exactly these types of skewed methodologies and flawed results that Dr. Cassidy's bill will help shine a light on. We owe it to the American people to ensure that our federal agencies are not overstating benefits or understating economic impacts to further political agendas. This will become increasingly critical as EPA and the Administration attempt to justify its forthcoming greenhouse gas regulations with unsound and untested "Social Cost of Carbon" methodology, an issue we intend to explore in the near future.

I also strongly support H.R. 1900, the "Natural Gas Pipeline Permitting Reform Act." The certainty provided by this legislation will help natural gas pipeline projects get sited and built without undue delay, while also ensuring such projects are safe and environmentally sound. If we are to take advantage of our newfound energy abundance and boost our economy, we must modernize our existing permitting process to align it with current and future energy realities.

Finally, the Committee will consider H.R. 83, which would require the Secretary of the Interior to assemble a team of experts to address the energy needs of the insular areas of the United States and the Freely Associated States through the development of energy action plans.

I urge my colleagues to support all these bills and I yield back the balance of my time.